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SAN DIEGO STUDENTS TAKE THEIR CASES TO PEER COURT

New Juvenile Offenders Diversion Program Debuts in the City of San Diego

WHAT: The City of San Diego's Peer Court, a new program to reduce juvenile crime by educating young people about the consequences of criminal activity and by holding first-time juvenile offenders accountable, debuts at City Hall. More than seventy students from Kearny High School will take part in four sentencing hearings as prosecutors, defense attorneys, jurors, and court personnel.

***** NOTE:** Because the participating offenders are juveniles, you will not be permitted to identify them; however, you are permitted to photograph/videotape the other students in the proceedings.

WHEN: Tuesday, March 16, 1999, at 9 a.m.

WHERE: City Council Chambers, 12th floor of the City Administration Building, 202 C Street, San Diego.

WHO: The City of San Diego's Peer Court is a partnership between the Mayor's Office, the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego City Attorney's Office, the Office of the Public Defender, and the San Diego Unified School District.

WHY: In January 1999, Mayor Susan Golding announced the creation of the Peer Court to reduce juvenile crime through education and deterrence. Under the supervision of the San Diego Police Department and the City Attorney's Office, the program provides first-time juvenile offenders, charged with certain infractions and misdemeanors, the opportunity to participate in a diversionary program by admitting guilt and being sentenced by their peers. The sentencing options range from letters of apology and papers to counseling to paying restitution and performing community service. High school students are exposed to the consequences of criminal conduct by participating in a series of classroom discussion groups and in the sentencing hearings. Point Loma High School students will also be taking part in Peer Court this spring.

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